United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1355
22 March 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Hugh Cholmondeley of Guyana appointed United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Coordinator for Somalia; in Addis Ababa, Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia receives report of fact-finding mission sent to Kismayo; scheduled to conclude tomorrow.

+ United Nations programmes and funds for southern Africa needed more than ever as South Africa begins major transformations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali says.

+ Secretary-General, on International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, says speedy settlement in South Africa is essential to allow for correction of serious socio-economic imbalances resulting from decades of apartheid.

+ Human Rights Committee opens forty-seventh session at Headquarters; to examine reports from Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Guinea, Niger and Iran.

+ Security Council to convene tomorrow on the "no-fly zone" issue; in the meantime, Bosnian peace talks continued this weekend with meetings on evacuation of sick, wounded and vulnerable groups from Srebrenica, among other things.

+ Kuwait regrets Iraq's non-participation in meeting of United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Border Demarcation Commission Geneva last week; stresses it is fourth consecutive time that Iraq refuses to participate.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Hugh Cholmondeley of Guyana as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Coordinator for Somalia. He will work under the overall guidance of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Admiral Jonathan Howe, according to a United Nations spokesman today.

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Mr. Cholmondeley will succeed Philip Johnston, President of CARE, who has served as Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for the past few months.

In a separate development, the Coordination Committee of the Conference on National Reconciliation in Somalia is expected to conclude its plenary session in Addis Ababa tomorrow.

According to the summary notes issued at Headquarters today, the Coordination Committee, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Lansana Kouyate, met earlier today to review the final reports of the Committees on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes (Property Claims) and on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.

The Committee also took note of the report of the Cease-Fire and Disarmament Committee as well as the report of the fact-finding mission sent to Kismayo to investigate the recent clashes between warring Somali factions.

In yet another development, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today announced that it had pulled out its expatriate staff from Mogadishu North, as of Saturday, 20 March, following an armed robbery at its offices in that part of the Somali capital.

According to a press release issued at Headquarters, the ICRC is still present in Somalia and continues its relief programme in Mogadishu South, as well as other cities throughout Somalia.

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United Nations programmes and funds for southern Africa were needed more than ever as South Africa was about to undertake major transformations, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today.

Speaking at the annual ceremony at Headquarters today for contributions and pledges to the United Nations Assistance Programmes and Funds for southern Africa, he also expressed hope for the continued support of Member States for these programmes, which constituted the humanitarian component of the Organization's efforts for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in South Africa.

The Secretary-General recalled that the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa and the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa had for over 25 years supported South African victims of apartheid, both inside and outside the country, and had provided legal assistance and humanitarian relief. Following a change in its mandate two years ago, he said, the Trust Fund was now working through broad-based, impartial organizations in South Africa itself. It was assisting the reintegration of released political prisoners and former exiles; providing legal assistance and support to individuals; and working for the effective implementation of legislation repealing apartheid laws, the Secretary-General said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at a meeting to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at Headquarters today, said that a speedy settlement in South Africa was essential to allow that country to address the serious socio-economic imbalances resulting from decades of apartheid. The event was being held under the aegis of the Special Committee against Apartheid.

Addressing a solemn meeting held by the Special Committee against Apartheid, the Secretary-General recalled that two weeks ago a Multiparty Planning Conference had been held in South Africa to plan for the resumption of full-scale multiparty constitutional negotiations. In a far-reaching decision, the participants, who represented the broadest spectrum of political parties and organizations ever assembled on South African soil, had committed themselves to the multiparty negotiations scheduled to be held not later than 5 April, he said. That "historic" meeting was a tribute to the resilience, wisdom and determination of the South African leadership -- black and white -- to forge ahead and rise above their differences to build a common future.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the United Nations, which was committed to facilitating the negotiating process, had spared no effort in bringing about peace and reconciliation. Last July, while South Africa was engulfed in endless recrimination, turmoil and politically motivated violence, the Security Council had offered a forum to South African political leaders to state their position. The Council had also urged them to renounce violence and remove the remaining obstacles to resume negotiations, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said.

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The Human Rights Committee, at the opening of its forty-seventh session at Headquarters today, elected its officers for the next two years and adopted the agenda and programme of work for the three-week session. It elected Nisuke Ando, expert from Japan, as Chairman.

During the session, which is scheduled to conclude on 8 April, the Committee will examine reports from the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Guinea, Niger and Iran, which are parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Committee, an 18-member body of experts serving in their personal capacity, monitors compliance of States parties with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which came into force in 1976, ten years after its adoption by the General Assembly. The Covenant guarantees to every one the right to life, liberty and security of person. It prohibits torture, cruel or degrading treatment or punishment, and arbitrary deprivation of life.

The Committee will also examine communications from nationals of States who are parties to the Optional Protocol and who claim to be victims of violations of any of the rights proclaimed in the Covenant. Sixty-six States are parties to the Optional Protocol.

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The Security Council will convene tomorrow afternoon in a formal meeting to consider the issue of the "no-fly zone" over Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was announced tonight at Headquarters.

In the meantime, the Bosnian peace talks continued over the weekend with meetings chaired by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, and the European Community negotiator, Lord Owen, on the evacuation of sick, wounded and vulnerable groups from Srebrenica. Also discussed were interim arrangements with regard to the nature of the governing mechanism and the status of Sarajevo, as well as the question of detainees and the release of prisoners of war.

Meetings over the weekend were held with the envoy of the Russian Federation, Deputy Foreign Minister Churkin, the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Croat leader, Mate Boban, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the United States Special Envoy, Reginald Bartholomew.

Today, meetings were scheduled with the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), the Security Council President- on the question of Macedonia, and the five Permanent Members of the Council - China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States - regarding the "no-fly zone".

In Geneva, the talks on the Serb-controlled Krajina in Croatia chaired by the deputy Chairmen of the Yugoslav Conference continued over the weekend.

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Kuwait has expressed "strong" regrets over Iraq's non-participation in the meeting of the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Border Demarcation Commission held in Geneva last week.

The Kuwaiti Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Mohammad A. Abulhasan, in a letter to the Security Council President, dated 19 March, noted that this was the fourth consecutive time that Iraq had "refused" to attend the Commission's meetings, which currently pertain to the demarcation of the sea boundary. Iraq's non-participation also reflected the country's "ill-intention" towards complying with Council resolutions, he said.

The letter called on the Council to take "appropriate" measures in ensuring Iraq's compliance with the "letter and substance" of its relevant resolutions.
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